

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 STATE 125206
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03
PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 IO-14 ACDA-12 EUR-12 OPR-02
SY-05 SCS-06 CA-01 NEA-11 EA-12 ARA-14 OMB-01
TRSE-00 AID-05 /145 R

DRAFTED BY STF:JCONLEY:GCB

APPROVED BY STF:WLSWING

S/S-O:JTHYDEN

-----128344 171153Z /53

O 171138Z MAY 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 125206

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPR, CG

SUBJECT: SHABA INCURSIONS: U.S. PRESS REACTION

1. WASHPOST MAY 17 CARRIED FRONT PAGE STORY BY GEORGE
WILSON AND DAVID OTTAWAY HEADLINED "GIS ALERTED AS FEARS
OVER ZAIRE WAR MOUNT." STORY DOES NOT CARRY DATELINE.
TEXT FOLLOWS:

ELEMENTS OF THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION WERE PUT ON ALERT
YESTERDAY AMIDST MOUNTING FEARS FOR THE SAFETY OF
FOREIGNERS, INCLUDING AMERICANS, CAUGHT IN THE WAR ZONE
AROUND ZAIRE'S SOUTHERN MINING TOWN OF KOLWEZI .

AS HEAVY FIGHTING BETWEEN PRO-GOVERNMENT TROOPS AND THE
REBELS CONTINUED FOR THE SIXTH DAY AROUND THE COUNTRY'S
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 125206

MOST IMPORTANT COPPER CENTER, REPORTS IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA,
SAID THAT THREE OR FOUR EUROPEANS HAD BEEN EXECUTED OVER THE
WEEKEND.

THE ZAMBIAN REPORTS ALSO SAID ABOUT 15 AMERICANS WERE BEING
HELD BY REBELS, ALTHOUGH STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS IN
WASHINGTON SAID THEY HAD NO INFORMATION ABOUT AMERICAN

CAPTIVES.

THE PENTAGON WOULD NOT DISCLOSE HOW MANY TROOPS OR AIR-CRAFT HAD BEEN PUT ON ALERT AT POPE AIR FORCE BASE IN NORTH CAROLINA, BUT MILITARY SOURCES STRESSED THAT THE FORCE WOULD BE USED FOR EVACUATION ONLY AND NOT TO GO TO WAR IN ZAIRE.

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME TROOPS HAD BEEN ALERTED IN AN OVERSEAS CRISIS IN THE CARTER PRESIDENCY.

THE ALERT STEMMED FROM CARTER ADMINISTRATION WORRIES ABOUT 75 AMERICANS LIVING NEAR KOLWEZI, WHERE FIGHTING HAS BEEN HEAVY, OFFICIALS SAID.

SIXTY-TWO OF THOSE AMERICANS ARE EMPLOYEES OF THE MORRISON-KNUDSEN CONSTRUCTION FIRM, WHICH IS BUILDING A POWER FACILITY IN KOLWEZI. THE OTHER AMERICANS ARE NINE MISSIONARIES, ONE EMPLOYEE OF A COPPER FIRM AND ONE TOURIST.

"WE ARE VERY MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT THIS RENEWAL OF CONFLICT IN THE SHABA AREA" OF ZAIRE, STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN HODDING CARTER SAID YESTERDAY.

"OUR FIRST CONCERN IS THE WELFARE OF AMERICANS," CARTER SAID, ADDING THAT TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE" THERE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 125206

HAVE BEEN NO AMERICAN CASUALTIES IN THE WAR IN ZAIRE, ALTHOUGH ONE CHILD HAD BEEN REPORTED INJURED.

SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE, IN A SEPARATE MEETING LATER IN THE DAY WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, CALLED THE MILITARY SITUATION IN ZAIRE "SOMEWHAT CONFUSED," AND SAID EVACUATION OF AMERICANS "MAY BE NECESSARY."

THE 82ND AIRBORNE IS STRUCTURED TO FLY TO TROUBLE SPOTS LIKE ZAIRE ON SHORT NOTICE, USUALLY ONE BATTALION ABOUT 800 MEN AT A TIME. THE PARATROOPERS LAND EQUIPPED TO FIGHT.

THE PENTAGON SAID LAST NIGHT THAT NO OTHER MILITARY UNITS, SUCH AS WARSHIPS, HAD BEEN PLACED ON SPECIAL ALERT TO BACK UP PARATROOPERS IF THEY ARE ORDERED TO EVACUATE AMERICANS IN ZAIRE.

SOURCES IN LUSAKA REPORTED THAT INITIAL EFFORTS TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE REBELS FOR THE EVACUATION OF 3,000 TO 4,000 EUROPEANS LIVING IN THE WAR ZONE HAD MET WITH NO SUCCESS.

THE SOURCES SUGGESTED THAT THE EUROPEANS MAY NOW BE KEPT AS HOSTAGES AND USED AS A BARGAINING CHIP IN THE DISSIDENTS' DEALINGS WITH WESTERN GOVERNMENTS, AS WELL AS ZAIRE AUTHORITIES.

THE OTHER PRINCIPAL WESTERN POWERS WITH INTERESTS IN ZAIRE-BELGIUM AND FRANCE WERE SAID YESTERDAY TO ALSO BE LAYING PLANS FOR THE EVACUATION OF THEIR NATIONALS FROM THOSE PARTS OF SHABA PROVINCE AFFECTED BY THE FIGHTING.

HOWEVER, WITH KOLWEZI'S AIRPORT IN THE HANDS OF THE REBELS, IT WAS NOT CLEAR HOW THE FOREIGNERS WOULD BE EVACUATED.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 125206

IN LATE 1964, THE UNITED STATES AND BELGIUM COOPERATED IN AN OPERATION TO FREE EUROPEAN HOSTAGES BEING HELD IN KISANGANI, THEN CALLED STANLEYVILLE, BY ANOTHER REBEL GROUP. THAT OPERATION INVOLVED U.S. PLANES DROPPING BELGIAN PARATROOPERS ON THE TOWN AND DRIVING THE REBEL FORCES FROM THE AREA.

BOTH EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN BRUSSELS AND SPOKESMAN FOR THE CONGO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT, THE GROUP BEHIND THE SHABA INSURGENCY, REPORTED THAT KOLWEZI AND RAILWAY TOWN OF MUTSHATSHA 60 MILES TO THE WEST HAD FALLEN TO THE REBELS.

BUT SOME REPORTS REACHING LUSAKA YESTERDAY SEEM TO INDICATE THE ZAIRIAN ARMY WAS STILL HOLDING OUT IN SEVERAL PARTS OF KOLWEZI AND THAT NOT ALL EUROPEANS THERE WERE CAPTIVES OF THE REBELS. ONE REPORT SAID ONLY A NUMBER OF MALES HAD BEEN ROUNDED UP BY THE REBELS.

THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT CLAIMED THAT IT WAS STILL IN CONTROL OF MOST OF KOLWEZI AND THAT PARATROOPERS HAD BEEN DROPPED INTO THE WAR ZONE AND OTHER REINFORCEMENTS WERE ON THE WAY.

IT HAS CALLED UPON FRANCE, BELGIUM, THE UNITED STATES, MOROCCO AND EVEN CHINA TO SEND ASSISTANCE BUT SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO FIRM REPLY FROM ANY OF THESE COUNTRIES. LAST YEAR, FRANCE FLEW IN 1,500 MOROCCAN TROOPS TO SHABA PROVINCE DURING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT'S FIRST UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO TAKE IT OVER AND TOPPLE PRESIDENT MOBUTU SESE SEKO.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 125206

ZAIRE SAYS THE FRONT IS ARMED AND SUPPORTED BY CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION AND THAT ITS FORCE-3,000 TO 4,000 STRONG- INVADERS FROM NEIGHBORING ANGOLA. ZAIRES AND ANGOLA HAVE BEEN BITTER ENEMIES EVER SINCE THE 1975-1976 ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR WHEN MOBUTU BACKED PRO-WESTERN FACTIONS THAT LOST OUT

TO THE NON-RULING CUBAN AND SOVIET-SUPPORTED POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA.

MOST ACCOUNTS OF THE PRESENT FIGHTING SEEM TO BACK UP THE ZAIRIAN CONTENTION THAT THE REBELS CAME FROM ANGOLA AND PROBABLY CROSSED NORTHWESTERN ZAMBIA TO LAUNCH THEIR ATTACK ON KOLWEZI. HOWEVER, ZAMBIA HAS DENIED IT GAVE ANY HELP TO THE REBELS, OR THAT THEY PASSED THROUGH ITS TERRITORY.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF KOLWEZI IS THOUGHT TO BE CRUCIAL BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE MINING CENTER AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ITS LOSS WOULD HAVE ON THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT HAS ALREADY STATED THAT ITS MAIN OBJECTIVE, THIS YEAR AS LAST, IS THE OVERTHROW OF MOTUTU.

ONCE KOLWEZI FALLS, THE REBELS ARE EXPECTED TO MOVE ON TENKE, 45 AIR MILES TO THE EAST AND A STRATEGIC ROAD AND RAIL JUNCTION FOR THE EXPORT OF ONE-THIRD TO ONE-HALF OF ALL OF ZAIRES COPPER. WITH TENKE IN THEIR HANDS, THE REBELS WOULD PRESUMABLY HALT ALL COPPER EXPORTS TO THE NORTH IN THE HOPE OF PROVOKING AN ECONOMIC CRISIS FOR THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT.

THE REST OF ZAIRES 450,000 TONS OF COPPER IS EXPORTED THROUGH ZAMBIA, RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA.

CONTROL OF TENKE WOULD ALSO ALLOW THE FRONT'S FORCES TO ISOLATE THE SHABA PROVINCE CAPITAL OF LUBUMBASHI AND TO STRIKE NORTHWARD TOWARD KAMINA, A MAJOR ZAIRIAN AIR FORCE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 125206

BASE FOR ITS FRENCH MIRAGE JETS.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS REPORTED TO BE FLYING IN TO REINFORCEMENTS TO LUBUMBASHI AND TO HAVE IMPOSED A CURFEW ON THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL.

REBEL FORCES ARE ALSO SAID TO BE GATHERING FOR ATTACKS ON

OTHER MAIN TOWNS ALONG THE ROAD AND RAIL ROUTE WEST OF
MUTSHATSHA LEADING TOWARD THE ANGOLAN BORDER, INCLUDING
KASAJI AND DILOLO.

THERE WAS NO FIRM EVIDENCE YESTERDAY, AFTER SIX DAYS OF
FIGHTING, THAT THE ZAIRIAN ARMY WAS HAVING MUCH SUCCESS
IN DISLODGING THE REBELS FROM EITHER KOLWEZI OR MUTSHATSHA
DESPITE THE USE OF ITS MIRAGE JET FIGHTERS TO BOMB AND
STRAGE THEIR POSITIONS. THE REBELS' USE OF URBAN
GUERRILLA WARFARE TACTICS WAS SAID TO BE HAMPERING THE
USE OF JETS.

HOWEVER, IT APPEARED FROM MOST AVAILABLE REPORTS THAT THE
ZAIRIAN ARMY, LED BY THE NORTH KOREAN-TRAINED KAMANYOLA
DIVISION, WAS FIGHTING MUCH HARDER THIS YEAR THAN LAST
AGAINST THE REBELS. IN ADDITION, MOST REPORTS REACHING
HERE AND EUROPEAN CAPITALS TEND TO BE 24 HOURS BEHIND IN
THEIR INFORMATION, MAKING THE LATEST SITUATION UNCLEAR.

IF THE ZAIRIAN ARMY FAILS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO MAKE
ANY APPRECIABLE PROGRESS IN REGAINING CONTROL OF KOLWEZI
AND MUTSHATSHA, OUTSIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS THE
MOROCCANS PROVIDED LAST YEAR, IS LIKELY TO BECOME CRUCIAL
TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. END QUOTE
VANCE

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, INVASIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE125206
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JCONLEY:GCB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780207-0815
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780548/aaaabowo.tel
Line Count: 248
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e5e6b39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2661409
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHABA INCURSIONS: U.S. PRESS REACTION
TAGS: SOPN, MOPS, PBOR, CG, US
To: KINSHASA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e5e6b39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014